RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

FEBRUARY, 1989 232 Ogden Avenue – Jersey City, N.J. 07307 – (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY TO OUR MEMBERS

MEETING MINUTES

January, 1989! The beginning of a new year. Riverview Neighborhood Association is once again ready to take on the challenge of effecting changes in our own neighborhood and in the long run, changes in our city.

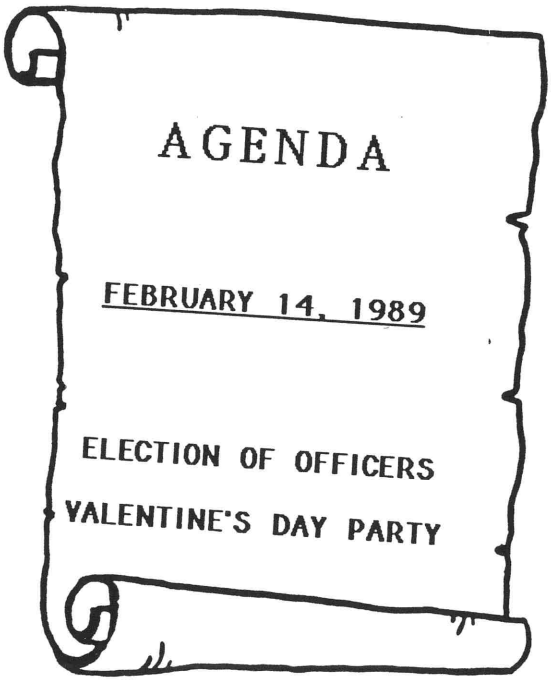
The regular monthly meeting of R..N.A. was held on Tuesday, the 10th of January at the Harborview Health Care Center. While we did not have any guest speakers , the officers had plenty of things to talk about. Some of the items discussed were the neighborhood Christmas carolling, the success of the 1988 effort to help the needy, R.N.A.'s effort to get garbage cleaned up from various properties on both Ogden and Palisade Avenues, our recent meeting with a neighborhood property owner to discuss his plans for a development project and updates on the reservoir and Christ Hospital plans.

After these subjects had been discussed, we opened up the nominations for officers for the next term beginning March, 1989 through February, 1990. The nominations will be open until the February, 1989 meeting. You may still nominate someone for office or a nominee may decline their nomination at this time.. The nominations will be closed and the vote will be taken at the February meeting.

Please make a special effort to attend the February meeting and remember to bring your dues for your 1989 membership in R.N.A. Only those members who have paid their dues will be eligible to vote in the election of officers. Dues are $3.00 a year. A small social will be held after the elections.

Join your neighbors at the next R.N.A. meeting on Tuesday, February 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the Harborview Health Care Center.

Maria E. Tuzzo
Secretary



Under the Chair

The new year has started off with a lot of activity in our neighborhood. Attempts to get the City to respond to abandoned and warehoused buildings on our block has met with success. Working with the Building Department and the Division of Property Conservation, RNA has helped provide testimony to get the Municipal Court to impose $52,000.00 in fines on the owners of 285 Ogden Avenue for warehousing and vacant building conditions on December 23, 1988 (see separate article, on page 11).

On December 1 ,1988, RNA went to Municipal Court to testify against the owners of 234-236 Ogden Avenue (Chemrik, Inc and Maria Baratta : Norman Wilson is the principal in this company and Aurel Villari is his attorney) for having an unsecured building. The outcome was that Wilson finally boarded up the property and put a metal gate across the driveway. While this is just a temporary measure and an unsatisfactory one at best (there was a subsequent break-in on December 24th, after the property was secured), RNA will continue to police this property and make sure that the owner is responsible for it. A court date for 234-236 Ogden for warehousing is to be scheduled within the month. After the court appearance, RNA set-up a meeting with Norman Wilson to discuss the renovation and development of 234-236. After a rather long and weary debate, nothing was agreed upon between the participants: Mr. Wilson and party are still determined to build between 30 and 40 condos on this four-lot property in a middle of an R-2 zone. The Committee was unable to convince him to either reasonably reduce the number of units to eight (which is what is legally allowed under the zoning) or renovate the existing buildings : two two-family houses and a large garage.(Footnote: It seems that Mr. Wilson has a few other properties in Jersey City that are under scrutiny by the City : 31-33 Concord and 61 Concord for warehousing and unsecured conditions.)

The final set of properties that RNA is complaining about is the burned-out 253-255 Ogden Ave. An very informative letter appeared recently in the Jersey Journal under the FIXIT column (see page 10 for reprint)that describes in full the problems that these two buildings are causing the neighborhood.

If there are any other buildings or property in our neighborhood, either on Ogden or Palisade that are not secured properly or being warehoused, please contact the Building Department, the Division of Property Conservation, or RNA. It is a crime that should not be tolerated by our community because it creates a slum-, or blight-like condition: which destabilizes the neighborhood.

A word of thanks for Mr. Mark Redfield, the enforcement officer for the Housing Clinic who has helped RNA by listening, investigating and bringing these problems to the attention of the City and the Municipal Court.

OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATES:

RNA has received replies from several of the property owners who were notified with our November letters of certain unlawful conditions on their properties, such as: sanitation problems, illegal apartments, overcrowding, unruly children and suspicions of drug use. (One interesting reply is reprinted on page 9.) RNA has also been contacted by the City agencies responsible for the monitoring of these problems: Sanitation Dept., Building Dept.,the Division of Property Conservation, and the Police Dept and they have begun to act on RNA's complaints. Although RNA feels somewhat uncomfortable with notifying the City about these problems, we are more distressed by the attitude of certain landlords and tenants alike who seem to display no responsibility or concern about the neighborhood in which

they live.

On January 23rd, the Committee for the Future of the Reservoirs met with Mayor Anthony Cucci to discuss the status of the reservoirs. The Mayor repeated his commitment for any future development on that site to be R-2: one- and two-family housing only (possibly 3-4 stories). There would be no displacement of residential housing and parking would be all off-street. Any affordable housing in the project would be off-site. In terms of developers, he stated he has informally spoken to a few people,but no commitments were made on either side. Regarding the building of the five million gallon water tank in Reservoir #2, he was asked about the need for public hearings for the approval of the construction contract. (There will be a nighttime Council meeting on Feb 9, to discuss and vote on the purchase of this concrete water tank.) There was also discussion of the temporary parking lot just built in Reservoir #2. The Mayor was also given a series of questions to ask the Water Dept. about this water tank and it s construction.

Christ Hospital has a proposal to build a medical office building and a 608 car garage Presently this plan is before the Planning Board. RNA is in the process of researching and organizing meetings with other neighborhoods to discuss this important project. A full report will be in next month's newsletter.

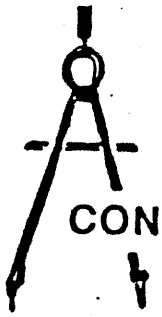
FOOD AND TOY COLLECTION A SUCCESS

Although it got off to a very slow start, the 1988 effort to aid the needy families of our City turned out to be a great success. We were able to donate thirteen grocery bags of food to the Salvation Army along with five department store size shopping bags of toys.

While our toy effort equalled our donation for 1987, our food collection was two bags higher. The Salvation Army was most happy to accept our contribution.

On behalf of the Community Awareness Committee, I wish to thank all those people who contributed food and/or toys and helped make our yearly aid to those less fortunate a success. As Lt. Chevez of the Salvation Army said in his letter of thanks, "you are special people" I couldn't agree with him more..

Maria E. Tuzzo



CONRAD'S CORNER

What's happened to all our environmentalists who opposed the Sea Wall, not even a peep after an announcement to a 16.8 million dollar contract for its construction to prevent erosion of the park.

What about the studies made by the Rudat Team of Architects and others that there would be no erosion along the water's edge of the park and even if there were the resultant beach like Caven Point would be ideal fish breeding grounds so necessary for aquatic life along the Hudson. The Sea Wall will become just so much more of a continuous bulkheading from Bayonne to Fort Lee along the Hudson.

The silting along the Jersey side of the Hudson has become so great that the Port Authority abandoned dredging the Hudson piers years ago and still the money for the Sea Walk has been appropriated for the prevention of erosion and not for recreation.

It was pointed out that the Sea Walk would be impractical to patrol because of its mile and a half length.It is also too great a distance for most people especially seniors to walk to return to their parked cars, a total three mile hike. Instead it was suggested to have five lookout points similar to the design of Bayonne County Park with benches and parking along the water's edge so that the view can be enjoyed with safety from muggings, in all kinds of weather, from a parked car and with a minimum of walking for the handicapped.

From a preservationist's view point an occasional remaining pierhead along the waterfront would serve as a monument of

Jersey City's past history as the second largest railroad terminal in the United States. The Central Railroad terminal had its beautiful Doric ferry house, designed by Kenneth Murchison, pulled down after some of its copper details were sent to Milan, Italy for an architectural exhibit. The "Restored Terminal" now standing alone looks like a Newport, Rhode Island mansion with the details of its surrounding park like area as if they had come from the recently changed name Newport of Jersey City.

There is not a marker or trace of the Lehigh Valley warehouses along Burma Road in what was once called Black Tom, considered one of the most modern docking facilities at the time. Our family clipper ship, the Margarette docked there and carried the first oil after it was discovered in Pennslyvania to Europe. Prior to that time all the oil came from Europe.

The Central Railroad Coal-port which supplied almost all the coal for the ocean liners and steam engines in the Metropolitan area was equipped to empty a coal car into a barge every five minutes. It was a marvel of engineering before the introduction of the internal combustion engines of autos and diesel locomotives put it out of business. Again not a marker or even a trace left of some of the surrealistic looking concrete piers which looked like modern pieces of sculpture.

When the Society of Industrial Archeology tried to save pier G as a unique example of a design to expedite the unloading of barges, it too caught fire in a spectacular blaze as it to help carry out the State's plan of a scorched earth policy for Liberty Park. Even the Terminal at one time was slated to be torn down. It was allowed to become completely vandalized before it was declared a State and Federal Historic Site, which then prevented its demolition.

It would seem the State would first build two imposing monumental entrances to Liberty Park, similar to the handsome approaches to Bayonne Park which is more like an Olmstead Park, the architect of Liberty Park said he was going to design. Compared to the design of Bayonne or Lincoln Park with it s handsome classical fountain, Liberty is a dull turkey. With the Sea Walk it will be much more of the paved over concrete sidewalks in the city we want to get away from.

Besides the Sea Wall a curved bridge designed to continue the curvature of the Sea Walk will blight the most magnificent view of the Statue of Liberty from the wetlands. A costly ugly extra and unnecessary construction which will be the same length as the Causeway first proposed by Morris Pesin for a direct connection to the Statue of Liberty when he made his famous canoe trip to show the relatively short distance from Liberty Park to the Statue of Liberty.

It's unfortunate that Liberty Park was never made a part of the Gateway National Park System, it would have avoided all the bickering now going on over commercialism to make it pay. Liberty Park and Caven Point would have remained as large open space parks like Sandy Hook and other Gateway parks. All the Great Adventures, Doll Museum, Science Center, Marinas, golf courses etc. and headaches yet to come would have been avoided.

R.N.A. TO ELECT OFFICERS

The election of officers for the Riverview Neighborhood Association will take place at the February general meeting on Tuesday, the 14th at the Harborview Health Care Center. Following is a list of those people who have been nomination for office.

Chairperson:	**Vito Brunetti**
Co-chairperson	**Valerie Kramer** **Bob Lewis**
Secretary	**Maria Tuzzo** **Alice Soto**
Treasurer	**Valerie Rea**
Sgt. at Arms	**Jack Rea**

The nominations are still open and will remain so until the February meeting. If there are no additions or deletions to be made, the nominations will be closed and the vote taken. All members who have paid their dues for the calendar year 1989 will be eligible to vote. Dues are $3.00 per year. You may pay your dues prior to elections on the night of the meeting.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Discussions regarding a proposed condominium apartment building to be located at 269 Palisade Avenue are continuing. The site is currently occupied by a two-story structure - the ground floor housing a delicatessen and the second level being two apartment units. The proposed design is being submitted by Michael Morgese of Lincoln Park, N.J. He is the owner of the building and lot and also operates the delicatessen.

As proposed, the design includes the renovation of the existing structure and the addition of four (4) stories. The finished building would contain four (4) one-bedroom units and five (5) two-bedroom units. The site is zoned R-4, high density residential, and the proposed design would require the granting of eleven (11) variances in order to be constructed. These variances would dismiss deficiencies regarding requirements for lot area, lot width, lot depth, front yard, rear yard, side yard, maximum lot coverage by the building, off-street parking, dwelling unit density per acre, recreation area, maximum allowable floor area ratio. In the proposed plan the delicatessen would continue to operate in the same space and location.

These variances were originally scheduled to be heard by the Jersey City Zoning Board of Adjustment on January 5, 1989. The hearing was postponed at the request of the owner in order to confer with residents and homeowners in the neighborhood adjacent to the site. At this time, the matter is being scheduled to be heard before the Board of Adjustment on March 2, 1989.

Several neighborhood meetings have been held to discuss the specific issues relating to the project and the requests for variances. On January 7, 1989, a meeting was held at a neighbor's home. Mr. Morgese presented the proposal to a number of neighborhood property owners and residents. Also in attendance were the project's architect, Alan Feld , and Mr. Morgese's attorney, Jon Campbell. Most of those attending were neighbors residing within one block of the proposed project site.

A number of concerns were expressed by the neighbors regarding various aspects of the proposed design. The most serious of these related to the size of the proposed building in relation to the site, the shortage of the required off-street parking and the hazards involved in locating the entry to the proposed parking lot directly on Palisade Avenue. Objections were also voiced to the proposed location of an external metal fire escape on the Palisade Avenue facade of the building. This escape would project out over the public sidewalk along the avenue.

The issues regarding the size of the proposed building and the amount of floor area center around the designations of R-4 zoning as well as the size of the proposed site. Of further consideration is the existing context of the neighborhood in terms of building heights. R-4 zoning requires large lot sizes - minimum widths are set at 100 feet and minimum depths at 200 feet. Only one-fourth of the lot may be covered with the building itself. In return for such large, open site plans R-4 zoning allows buildings to rise to a maximum height of 100 feet or ten stories. Since very few lots in the neighborhood are even nearly this size, it is apparent that the intent of the zoning designation is to encourage developers to acquire and combine lots. Existing structures would be either increased in size or, more commonly, be demolished to be replaced by high-rise buildings. In this case the proposed building complies with the R-4 height limitation since it would measure 68.5 feet and consist of six stories.However, the lot size is only one-seventh of that which is required under the zoning laws. Adding to the neighborhood's concern has been the fact that, with few exceptions, the structures in this area are no more than four stories tall. A number of residents are concerned regarding the effect of taller buildings upon light, air (wind activity) and view relative to the surrounding area.

Other concerns were expressed regarding the shortage of the required off-street parking as well as the already hazardous conditions at the intersection of Cuneo Place and Palisade Avenue and how these may be affected by the construction of the proposed structure.(Mr. Campbell, the attorney, agreed to a meeting with the Division of Traffic Engineering to discuss this intersection.)

Again this matter is scheduled to be heard at the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting on Thursday, March 2, 1989. Mr. Morgese has approached RNA, requesting that viewpoints regarding this project be expressed prior to the hearing. After much deliberation, the residents of the immediate neighborhood have arrived at a consensus of their opinions (The consensus position of this project is listed below.) All residents and members who feel they will be affected one way or the other by this issue should make their endorsements or objections known to RNA at the next general meeting February 14th. A set of blueprints of the proposed building will be available for those of you who would like to see them at this next meeting.

Hank Cesari

CONSENSUS POSITION ON THE 296 PALISADE AVENUE PROJECT

The residents are against the project that was presented to them on January 7, 1989. The mutual feeling is that this project has no merit and that it will not enhance or upgrade the neighborhood. There is a concern that this project will actually aggravate existing problem conditions in the immediate area.

The following is a list of comments that were made to the developer's attorney on January 25, 1989:

a) there should be adequate off-street parking for all vehicles,

b) the proposed structure should be no higher than the adjacent building, 11 Cuneo Place,

c) the proposed external fire escape should be moved off Palisade Avenue and it should not extend beyond the owner's property,

d) the project is too dense - there should be less units,

e) there should be adequate provision made for the storage of the building's garbage, and

f) the developer meet with the Division of Traffic Engineering and RNA to discuss the serious traffic problem at the intersection of Palisade and Cuneo.

JERSEY CITY ELECTIONS
AN OPEN INVITATION

This spring heralds Jersey City's next mayoral and council elections. RNA would like to extend an open invitation to all candidates for this municipal election to come and speak to our community. As an organization, our position is that RNA is not affiliated with any political party, organization or elected official; therefore as an organization we will not support, campaign, or work for any particular candidate. But just as important is our belief that RNA must provide an open forum for all people to express themselves and an environment to discuss and debate important issues of local and state implications.

RNA would like to ask any interested people to call and schedule their appearances beforehand to allow RNA to inform our members and neighbors in our monthly newsletter.

RNA is also interested in setting up a Heights debate for our mayoral and council races (which includes both Wards C and D). RNA will coordinate these debates with the other neighborhood associations in the area.

WE NEED AN AIR QUALITY STUDY

[The following is a draft letter written by Susan Kane , a member of the Weehawken Environmental Committee and the Uptown Development Action Coalition in Hoboken. She has approached the Waterfront Coalition for its support in urging the DEP to fund and implement an air pollution study in the Gold Coast area. Ms. Kane has been trying in an individual basis for some time to move the powers that be into the study, with no success. She has come to the conclusion that there must be an outcry by many in order to obtain the study.(RNA has asked to be added to the final letter as a supporter of Ms. Kane's position.)]

Honorable Christopher Daggett
Acting Commissioner
N.J. Dept. of Environmental Protection
CN 401
Trenton, N.J. 08625

Dear Commissioner Daggett:

As residents of Hudson and Bergen Counties, we are faced with development along our Hudson River Waterfront that requires caring attention from our State DEP.

Hudson County development problems are magnified here as no where else in the State because development is outpacing County and Regional planning. The high growth and rapidly developing Waterfront is creating serious degradation of air quality in the area. Traffic congestion will undoubtedly create harmful pollutants from the following development figures:

Housing Units: 36,000
Office Space: 35,000,000 sq ft.
Retail Space: 4,157,000 sq ft.
Hotel Rooms: 4,000
Boat Slips: 5,800
Restaurant Seats: ?
Parking Spaces: 54,735

(No figures available for Hoboken shipyards: 46 acres. No figures available for Arcorp Property: 400 acres.)

We are requesting the following:

A comprehensive traffic and air quality study and plan be immediately funded and started and its implementation plan be initiated within a reasonable period thereafter (2 months).

A carbon monoxide and ozone air quality monitoring program to track any significant increase in CO and Ozone concentrations to commense and gather monthly data for the next 24 months.

Monitoring receptive sites be installed to collect real life data rather than to continue with the mathematical models using traffic increase and flow assumptions.

Since we, in the region, ar in a Clean Air Act non-attainment status regarding ambient CO and Ozone concentrations, we are requesting that no DEP permits be granted for any new developments on the Hudson River Waterfront that will add to the traffic and air pollution until the State Implementation Plan, now in review, has been revised and the SIP Task Force has brought the ambient CO and ?Ozone toxic pollutants into the EPA Clean Air Act attainment status. Reassurance is essential that no new permitted development will reverse this attainment Clean Air Act status.

We trust that our appointed and elected officials will properly carry out the responsibilities of the people's business, especially when danger exists that could possibly destroy an essential quality of life. We strongly feel it is incumbent upon the DEP to remove the dangers of air toxic pollutants as soon as possible and to assure us that all reasonable efforts are made to halt any and all increases to it.

Sincerely,
Susan Kane
Hoboken , N.J.

UPDATE: COALITION FOR FAIR TAXATION

The Jersey City Coalition for Fair Taxation will appear in tax court on Friday, March 3 at 9 a.m. to respond to the motion of dismissal of their case. Coalition President Audrey Winkler, says "that a large turnout of people to support the court appearance will show that this issue of revaluation is a major concern to tall Jersey City residents."

The Coalition Steering Committee has planned a rally to take place in front of the Essex County Tax Court in Newark. The rally will follow a "mock funeral". The funeral is a symbol of the "death of home life."

Mrs. Winkler points out that for many their homes are their way of life. "Numbers are important" says Mrs. Winkler. We must show the community outside of Jersey City that we are really fighting for all property owners and tenants who face being "OVERTAXED".

"Our opponents", continues Mrs. Winkler, "will try to convince the judge that we do not have the right to sue the City." "But if a City's own residents do not have legal recourse to hold the City officials accountable for their actions, then who does have that right?"

This is not a problem that will go away if we ignore it long enough. The revaluation of our property will stand as is unless we can convince the Judge that it was conducted improperly and that the Real Property Appraisers did not live up to their contract with the City.

The coalition has set up a hot line for further information regarding this court appearance. That number is 451-8445. If you can be of help or wish to join the ranks, please call.

(The Downtown Coalition of Neighborhood Associations is sponsoring this mock funeral procession from downtown Jersey City to Tax Court on the morning of March 3. .The procession symbolizes the certain death of Jersey City which will occur if this reval is allowed to stand. Led by a hearse, the procession of buses and cars will leave from Moochie's Bistro, 516 Jersey Avenue at 8 a.m. on Friday morning. For directions to the Tax Court and information on the procession call the hotline: 451-8445.

LETTER FROM COUNCILMAN HART

Dear Friends,

Thank you. Once again, for the eighth year in a row, I have had the pleasure of riding about The Heights during my favorite time of year, Christmas Time. And, once again, so many of my people shared the joy of this Season by decorating their homes so beautifully. The love and joy which lives within these homes is evident in the many and varied expressions of Christmas and it always pleases me to see the new and innovative changes in the decorations each year.

All of the good which Christmas represents is visible in your home. Your home and all of you are exactly why we can celebrate "Heights Pride". It is through these strong traditional values, found in our Heights homes and people, and expressed so well and so beautifully at Christmas, that we gather our community strength so as to fight for our rightful place as a great neighborhood. Oh, we have our problems, all humans do. However, our strength allows us to resolve them more quickly and in a greater sense of community. Thanks for being such a vital part of that.

As always, my schedule keeps me from seeing you all on more personal basis as often as I'd like. Please know, however, that I aware of what you mean to us and that I am appreciative of that. Especially at Christmas time.

I sincerely wish you all of the blessings and the beauty of the Season of the Newborn Christ Child. May 1989 bring you the very best of health so that you can enjoy satisfaction in your work, success in your endeavors, the joy and love of family and Peace.

Sincerely,
Tom Hart
Councilman ,Ward D

COMMENTS FROM RNA MEMBERS

(The following is a reply from the owners of 202-204 Ogden Avenue to the series of letters RNA sent out in December complaining about the conditions of several buildings on Ogden Avenue.)

As people who are very interested in the improvement of the Ogden Avenue area, we were shocked, amazed and angered at the letter we received from you on Saturday December 10, which was dated November 10th.

We were shocked that, as members of the RNA, we were not given the Courtesy of a telephone call to discuss this problem. We were amazed because you are obviously not aware of what is going on in your own neighborhood regarding the actual causes of the garbage problem. We were angered that you had the gall to put the blame on our tenants and on us, when we have made serious efforts, at great expense, to try to improve the grounds around our building, ESPECIALLY the trash collection area.

The area around 202-204 Ogden Avenue IS being abused, but NOT BY OUR TENANTS. You should have been aware that virtually all of the trash that is littering the front and side of our buildings, as well as the garbage that is not placed inside our receptacles are being thrown there, with one exception, by people who live across the street. Since last spring, we have been keeping tabs on the garbage and litter problem by paying certain tenants a monthly stipend to oversee the garbage area as a SUPPLEMENT to the job the Super does EVERY morning. We have bought more and larger garbage cans. We have built, at a cost of $1,000 two new, larger enclosed garbage collection boxes. We have sent letters and notices to our tenants, reminding them of their responsibilities regarding garbage. The single tenant who has not been placing her trash inside the collection boxes has been warned repeatedly concerning her lack of regard for the other tenants and for the neighborhood.

One of us goes to the building at least once a week. Often, several trips a week are made. We are constantly in contact with tenants and the Super. We have gone to the police to report people who live across the street but loiter outside our buildings drinking beer and throwing empty beer bottles and cans into our garden areas. We have called the police from New York to report these people when tenants have called us about them. We are not the typical "absentee landlords" by any means!

Several of our tenants have seen people who live in buildings across the street throw their garbage around our garbage area, but not into the bins. We have had our Super clear the debris these same people have left in our garden areas. These same tenants have observed children leaving the building across the street to spray our walls and sidewalk with graffiti. Other (local) children who live across the street from the Nursing Home have been seen breaking windows and climbing the garbage collection boxes to harass one of our tenants.

We suggest that before you shoot from the hip and attack the responsible property owners, that you get your facts straight. Then you might act to solve the problem instead of alienating the responsible people in the neighborhood.

We reject your entire letter and expect an immediate, written apology, and a letter to all those you sent copies of your letter of November 10th (the Mayor's office, the Sanitation Dept., and Councilman Tom Hart) rescinding all your baseless charges, along with a copy of your apology to us. We, too, are sending copies of this letter to all of the above.

One last item. In the entire time that we have been members of the Association, we have yet to be informed of a meeting in advance. All the correspondence we have ever received have come in an untimely

manner. Judging from your actions in regard to the garbage problem, we can understand the haphazard approach you have shown in this area, too.

Most sincerely,

Howard S. Passel
Danny Abreu

December 13, 1988

UPDATE: 253-255 OGDEN AVENUE

(The following article is a reprint from The FIXIT column in the Jersey Journal, dated 1/13/89 and written by Dan Rosenfeld.)

In July of 1987, 255, 253, and 251 Odgen Avenue, Jersey City, burned down in a fire that killed one person. The house at 251 has been rebuilt, but nothing has been done to 253 and little to 255.

The owners of 257 Odgen Avenue have called the Jersey City Mayor's hot line, the Mayor, the Buildings Department and the Health Department but feel they have received nothing but a "run-around." They contacted FIXIT late last month.

"The mayor sent a building inspector who told me that the buildings should have been torn down, yet nothing has happened," the owner said. "My repeated calls and visits to City Hall have gotten me nowhere.I can't believe that my block has turned into the slums of Jersey City Heights."

The buildings have become infested with mice, a problem which is spreading to 257, the owner said. A professional exterminator said the problem cannot be solved until the empty buildings are torn down.

"The other day my pregnant wife opened up a closet and a mouse jumped onto her," the owner said. "She's due any day. (The couple also has a year old child.) Now, squatters have moved into the buildings. None of this makes me sleep well at night."

The owner continued: "My house was not damaged by the fire, but the Fire Department cut holes in my roof to make sure the fire wouldn't spread any further. My house suffered a great deal of water damage and, though I'm ready and able to pay for repairs, the contractors said it would be a waste of time. He said until 255 is attended to, any repairs I do would soon be destroyed because of the poor condition of the attached building.

"I thought that if you owned a piece of property you must keep the land clean and presentable. This place is a mess and a danger to anyone that goes near it. I can't believe how much I have to pay in taxes to live with mice next door to a junkyard and a health hazard."

FIXIT contacted city Construction Official Micheal Regan who said he was aware of some of the owner's difficulties, but not all.

Once notified of 255 Ogden's condition, he issued a commence construction order. He said if the building's owner, Walter Kosky, does not comply with the order he will be issued citations. In Kosky's defense, Regan said the building has been undergoing slow rehabilitation.

Getting work started on 253 Ogden will not be as easy. Regan scheduled a condemnation hearing for that building, but the owners-an elderly couple-did not appear in court. The city can tear down the building at any time, but Regan is trying to treat all involved fairly.

Regan said the couple is currently living in a hotel in Journal Square and apparently isn't interested in the building. He said he has been trying to contact a brother of the couple to see if he will repair the building. If there is no significant movement in a month Regan said he will move to have the building razed.

"Legally I could knock it down tomorrow, but I have moral and professional responsibility," he said. "My main goal is to get it back onto the market.

Mark Redfield, senior code enforcement officer, is also putting pressure on the owners of 255 and 253. Since the buildings are vacant, the owners were issued summonses on Jan. 4 for "warehousing" apartments, Redfield said.

HAPPY

VALENTINE'S

DAY

Warehousing is having a vacant building and doing nothing with it. Property owners can get extensions and exemptions to the warehousing ordinance, but neither have filed for one, Redfield said.

A solution to the rodent problem may be closer at hand. Robert Vogt, the city's assistant health officer, said the Health Department had received no compliants concerning 255 or 253 Ogden Ave. in 1988. Frequently, residents will talk to a building inspector about a rodent problem and assume that this information will get to the Health Department, he said.

Vogt has assigned investigator Denise Santiago to the Ogden Ave. case. If Santiago discovers mice infestation, she will file a compliant notice and the owners will be summoned and forced to exterminate, he said.

The Health Department's efforts will be coordinated with the Building Department, Vogt said, now that FIXIT notified him that Regan has begun legal proceedings.

FIXIT will check in periodically on Ogden Avenue to see how the rehabilitation is faring.

UPDATE; 285 OGDEN AVENUE

(The following article is a reprint from the Jersey Journal written by Emily Smith an dated December 12, 1988.)

The landlords of three Jersey City buildings were fined nearly $52,000 yesterday for housing violations and warrants were issued for their arrest after the two men failed to appear in housing court.

Riverview Associates, which is owned by Gomma and Ahmed Elsaid of anti-warehousing violations, failing to secure a vacant building and repairing broken windows.

The Elsaid brothers could not be reached for comment. Judge Richard T. Nieto issued a warrant for the arrest of the Elsaids after they defied a court order to appear in court.

Nieto fined the corporation $100-a-day for each of the five units that have been kept vacant. Under city housing laws, vacant apartments must be rented within 60 days of becoming vacant, said Harold O'Grady, municipal housing court prosecutor.

The apartments at 285 Ogden Avenue have been empty for two years, O'Grady said. Applications for extensions on the rental deadline can be given if the building is being renovated. O'Grady said no application was filed.

The anti-warehousing fines were retroactive to the date when the city's Division of Property Conservation filed compliants about the housing violations. Compliants were filed 99 days ago, O'Grady said.

An additional fine of $2000 was made for failing to secure the building at 285 Ogden Avenue and for not repairing broken windows at 116 Ogden Avenue and 233 Palisades Avenue.

Members of the Riverview Neighborhood Association first notified the city of problems in February. Association members testified yesterday about their complaints with the buildings, O'Grady said.

The matter was scheduled to be heard three times but the manager of Riverview Associates, Aimar Ahmed, appeared without a lawyer each time, O'Grady said.

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